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・筆 谈・

经世致用与中国史学的成长

 唐宋经世史学之新高度
 张国刚·4·

 时代变革与清史研究的成长契机
 朱 浒·14·

 社会史论战与中国新史学的成长
 杨振红·22·

 中国边疆史地研究的通变与励进
 冯建勇·29·

 国际关系史研究的重大问题及其现实意义
 戴超武·36·

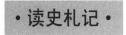
·专题研究·

| 商周东土夏遗与夏史探索 | 陈 | 絜· | 43 | • |
|---------------------|------|----|----|---|
| 封建郡县之争与秦始皇嗣君选择 | 熊 | 永・ | 68 | • |
| 丝路沿线的民族交融:占星家与乌珠穆沁部 | 乌云毕力 | 格・ | 92 | |

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

| 胶州湾事件中清政府的对俄外交 | 贾小叶・113・ |
|------------------------|----------|
| 派系分合与民初司法界的改造 | 韩 策・135・ |
| | |
| 全球史与民族叙事:中国特色的全球史何以可能 | 张旭鹏・155・ |
| 西方政治学的前史:公元前5世纪希腊的政治思想 | 黄 洋・174・ |
| 近代华人移民与南太平洋地区复合生态的形成 | |
| | |

费 晟 毕以迪 (James Beattie) · 191 ·



汉代的皇帝责问

刘晓满·209·

英文目录与摘要(CONTENTS)

• 219 •

Essays

"Undertaking Thorough Studies to Meet Present Needs" and the Development of Chinese Historiography (4)

Editor's Note: The principle of "undertaking thorough studies to meet present needs" is a time-honored tradition of Chinese historiography. Successive generations of historians have been continually mindful of "staying ahead of the tide of the times, comprehending changes from the past to the present, and developing new thought first and foremost" as the basis of their self-cultivation and studies. This is the source of, and driving force behind, the uninterrupted development and continuous prosperity of Chinese historiography. This principle embodies historians' mission to "ordain conscience for Heaven and Earth, and to secure life and fortune for the people," as well as their pursuit to "continue the lost teachings" of past sages, and to establish peace for all future generations". The mutually complementary principles of "restoring the original picture of history" and "undertaking thorough studies to meet present needs" constitute the two basic functions of historiography. Without objective historical records, we would lack a foundation for caring about the present; without thorough studies to meet present needs, historiography would lose its existential value. The principle of "undertaking thorough studies to meet present needs" was initiated at the beginning of Chinese historiography and has accompanied it through its development ever since. Viewing the principle in the context of the development promotes a deeper understanding of the mission, responsibility, and undertaking of Chinese historiography in the new era. For this reason, we have invited five scholars to advance discussion regarding this question for the benefit of our readers.

Special Topic Research

Exploration of the Xia Ruins in Eastern Lands in Shang and Zhou Dynasties andthe History of the Xia DynastyChen Jie(43)

According to available historical documents, there are two kinds of documentation

systems regarding the history of the Xia Dynasty: the system of the Records of the Grand Historian and the system of The Commentary of Zuo. Their narratives of the early history of the Xia Dynasty are entirely different, as one focuses on the western lands and the other focuses on the eastern lands. However, the system of the Records of the Grand Historian was more highly favored by subsequent generations and has therefore become a major resource for later explorations of the history of the Xia Dynasty. . Studies of the geographical distribution of the Xia Ruins during the Shang and Zhou Dynasties clearly indicate that the Zhusi clan mostly lived in present-day Shandong Province, and that their marital kin largely inhabited the area between Shandong Province and Henan Province. The lands and clans relevant to the Xia history were primarily located in Shandong Province and the eastern and northeastern areas of Henan Province. It is worth noting that the Xia history narrative in The Commentary of Zuo is not only consistent with geographic clues found in oracle bone and ancient bronze inscriptions, but also matches other inherited documents. With regards to studies of the origins of Xia culture and the early history of the Xia Dynasty, the Haidai region and the border zone between current Shandong Province and Henan Province require greater attention.

Conflict Between the System of Investiture and the Centralized Administrative Systemand Qin Shi Huang's Choice of Heir ApparentXiong Yong(68)

Qin Shi Huang's designation of his heir apparent through posthumous edict was a major issue in the history of dynasties featuring centralized administrative systems. Owing to huge differences in descriptions in unearthed and inherited documents, there is no unanimous consensus regarding this issue. In fact, the conflict between the system of investiture and the centralized administrative system, which lies hidden behind Qin Shi Huang's choice of heir, offers an important historical clue regarding this issue. After Qin Shi Huang took the throne, he was determined to abolish the system of investiture and establish prefectures and counties administered by his appointed officials. After he unified China, the imperial court officially decided to reward imperial kin and meritorious subjects "with a stipend derived from taxes of land". This measure was contrary to the Qin state's political tradition, which had been followed for over century, and gave rise to great dissatisfaction among his meritorious generals. This dissatisfaction then spread into cultural circles. Military, political, and cultural elites in the imperial court thus initiated a series of incidents against the centralized administrative system. These reactions caused Qin Shi Huang to hesitate in choosing his heir. Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that Fusu, the eldest son, was not Qin Shi Huang's ideal choice for heir apparent and that his youngest son Huhai's ascension to the throne was legitimate.

Ethnic Fusion along the Silk Road: Astrologers and Üjümüčin Subgroup

Oyunbilig Borjigidai(92)

The Silk Road expended and reached farther during the reign of the Mongol Empire and the Yuan Dynasty than ever before. Cultural exchanges and intermingling between different ethnic groups were dynamic along the route. Astrologers from Arab, Persia, and Central Asia introduced western knowledge of astronomy to the empire and, along with their families, assimilated into the Mongol ethnic group. After the Yuan court withdrew to the Mongolian steppe, because of the influences of the Mongolian culture and nomadic lifestyle, they gradually became a part of the Mongolian subgroup named Üjümüčin in the Ming period. Translated into Chinese, Üjümüčin means *yin yang*, referring to astrologers. Also, many erkigüd (Christians) and some Sartahul people joined the Üjümüčin subgroup. The Üjümüčin was a new clan composed of the people from Xiyu (the Western Regions) and other Mongolian subgroups. In the Qing period, the Üjümüčin divided into the Left and the Right Jasaγ Banners. Every administrative level under the banners still used the historical names of various clans. The transformation of the western astrologers into the Mongolian nomads is a representative case of ethnic fusion and cultural integration along the Silk Road.

Qing Government Diplomacy Towards Russia During the Jiaozhou Bay Incident

Jia Xiaoye(113)

After the German occupation of Jiaozhou Bay, the Qing Government, led by its strategic decision of "never dispatching troops" and trust derived from the signing of the *Sino-Russian Secret Treaty*, regarded Russia as a key ally in resolving the issue. Officials such as Li Hongzhang and Weng Tonghe thus made great efforts to gain support from Russia. However, Russia's strategic decisions regarding this issue never considered its

CONTENTS

alliance with China. Based on its national interests, Russia initially decided to send a fleet of warships to the area and later withdrew the order. Soon after, when the Qing Government decided not to request Russian support after previous efforts proved fruitless, the Russian fleet arrived without invitation. Using the Sino-Russia alliance as a pretext, they came to occupy Lüshun and Dalian. The Qing government wanted to resist this attempt but was unable to do so. This suggests that the arrival of the Russian fleet had nothing to do with the Qing government's attitude on the matter. It can be seen through relevant decisions from the Russian side that the Qing government was subject to humiliation and submission as a weak regime in diplomatic affairs with Russia for the Jiaozhou Bay Incident. It also exposed the naivety and ignorance of the Qing diplomatic officials of the time. The frenzy of Western powers carving up China after this incident indicated that Qing government diplomacy had already reached an impasse.

Factional Disputes and Judicial Reform in the Early Republic of China

Han Ce(135)

Disputes between the Ministry of Justice (Si Fa Bu) and the Supreme Court (Dali Yuan) in the early Republic of China are not only attributable to an inadequate legal system and unclear division of authority during regime change, but also have clear factional origins involving conflict between political parties and northern and southern regions of the country. Zhang Zongxiang and Jiang Yong belonged to the system of the Bureau for Revision and Compilation of Laws represented by Shen Jiaben in the late Qing Dynasty. They eventually emerged victorious in their struggle against Xu Shiying and Xu Qian, who represented the factional side. They later collaborated to repel members of the Southern Revolutionary Party recruited by the factional side and reorganized human resources in the judicial system. They also rectified the chaotic situation in the judicial system and enabled judicial personnel to maintain a basic level of stability and continuity for at least four to five years. This was quite different from the apparently frequent changes in the position of the attorney-general. At the same time, they also implemented a series of systems regarding judicial recusal, qualification tests, training institutions, appointments, rewards, punishments, and special accounting of judicial revenue. Their efforts to prevent military and political power from interfering with the judicial system eventually laid a solid ground for its development. Their judicial reforms

concerning human resources and the institutional system marked a major transition in the judicial development at that time and constituted a central theme for understanding the judicial system and personnel changes during the early years of the Beiyang government.

Global History and National Narrative: The Possibility of a Global History withChinese CharacteristicsZhang Xupeng(155)

Global history aims to surpass narratives of the nation-state, but for some non-western countries, especially those with time-honored historiographic traditions, national narratives still have their own value. With regard to the Chinese context, the nation-state remains a key framework for historical writing; In this sense, global history does not aim to transcend or dissolve the nation-state but to reconstruct the understanding of the nation-state within a broader historical context. This dialectical relationship between global history and national narrative enables the creation of a global history with Chinese characteristics. This requires Chinese historians to develop a new understanding and perception of China based on Chinese history. This means realizing that China is not simply a product of the coordinated development of a variety of internal forces. It is simultaneously the result of collective forces arising from international and even global factors. This way of understanding the nation and the world is generated internally, through a national narrative, rather than from the outside, and will thus become a key methodological premise for creating a global history with Chinese characteristics. It will also represent a contribution of Chinese historiography to global history.

Before the Emergence of Western Political Science: Political Thought in 5th Century BC Greece Huang Yang(174)

Regarding the history of Greek political thought and political science, the question of how Western political science came into being is an important one. Unexpectedly, however, although scholars have amply discussed Greek political theories, there are few explorations of the emergence of Western political science as a discipline. The political philosopher Leo Strauss offered a thorough analysis of this question. He concluded that Socrates' philosophy and ethics initiated Western political science. Yet Greek people had been discussing matters concerning systems of government since 470 BC. Greek intellectuals paid extensive attention to and discussed systems of government. They debated the merits and drawbacks of different systems of government and the question of the ideal government. Plato and Aristotle, two political philosophers in the fourth century BC, carried on these discussions. Under the influence of Socrates, they also took political ethics into consideration and thus initiated Western political science. In this regard, systems of government and political ethics are two key issues in Western political science.

Chinese Immigration in Modern Times and the Formation of a Complex Ecosystem inthe South PacificFei Sheng, James Beattie(191)

Environmental historians often explain ecological and cultural changes in the modern South Pacific as results of the creation of a "New Europe". Their narratives are generally based on interactions between Western colonialism and local experiences. As a matter of fact, China had also established and maintained close ties with the South Pacific region from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century. After the formation of a transportation network based on the sea trade, Chinese migrant laborers and, subsequently, Chinese capital played an active role in promoting the formation of a complex ecosystem of farming, grazing, and mining in the region. Modern Chinese people's ecological and cultural influence in the region expanded from sea to land, indirect to direct, and labor-intensive to capital-intensive. This not only shows the significant Chinese influence on global ecological reconstruction during the modern period. It also reminds the academic community that in-depth studies should be carried out to explore the dynamic role China has played in globalization, especially in the historical process through which the Pacific region was integrated.

Reading Notes of History

Accountability Mechanism of Han Dynasty Emperors

Liu Xiaoman(209)

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